

purple frontispiece, a full-page evangelist portrait, headpieces for the first gospel and the Acts, two apostle portraits, a plurality of text illustrations, a psalter headpiece, full-page scenes from the life of David, and a sequence of portraits introducing canticles and odes—all these have disappeared. But perhaps not irretrievably. Alleviation for the loss is found in the possibility that some of them may yet be recovered. Then we shall see how inept our proposed reconstructions have been.

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THE DATE OF THE CRUCIFIXION ACCORDING TO THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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THE well-known discrepancy between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel as to the day of the Crucifixion has been widely discussed in the past by a number of scholars. Some have tried in various ways to reconcile the accounts, while others are of the opinion that they are irreconcilable. In the last few years this much discussed subject has again received attention.¹

Billerbeck in his second volume of the *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* tries to prove that the discrepancy between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels as to the day of Crucifixion is due to the different ways of reckoning used by the Pharisees and the Sadducees at the time of the Crucifixion. The first day of Passover, the fifteenth of Nisan, of the year during which Jesus was crucified fell on Saturday. The Pharisees, in apprehension lest the holiday of Pentecost should fall on Sunday, which would make their observance coincide with the idea of the Sadducees (who held that

¹ T. Zahn, *Einleitung zum N.T.* vol. II; C. S. Davidson, *An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. II; Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua, Studies in the Gospels*, 1929; Barton, *The Origin of the Discrepancy between the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel as to the Date and Character of Christ's Last Supper with his Disciples*, *JBL.*, 1924; M. A. Power, "Nisan Fourteenth and Fifteenth in Gospel and Talmud: A Study in Jewish Camouflage," *American Journal of Theology*, April 1920; S. Zeitlin, "The Secret of Badhu", A Specimen of "Jewish Camouflage". *Ibid.*, 1920. Idem, *Origine de la Divergence entre les Evangiles synoptiques et l'Evangile non synoptique quand à la date de la crucifixion de Jesus*, *REJ.*, 1926.

Pentecost must always fall on Sunday, "the morrow of the Sabbath"), shifted the first day of Passover from Saturday to Friday, which was really the fourteenth of Nisan. Jesus and most of the people slaughtered the Pascal lamb on Thursday, the Eve of Passover. This account is given in the Synoptic Gospels. On the other hand, the author of the Fourth Gospel is quite correct in his statement that Jesus was crucified on the fourteenth of Nisan, for the Sadducees, the members of the Sanhedrin, did not recognize the reckoning of the Pharisees and were against the shifting of the Passover from Saturday to Friday. Hence the Friday on which the Crucifixion took place, according to the Sadducees, was not the first day of Passover, as the Pharisees maintained, but rather the Eve of Passover. This reckoning is given in John's narrative: "and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover." With this theory Billerbeck wants to reconcile the two statements of the seeming contradiction.²

Billerbeck's hypothesis is quite untenable, for the following reasons. If we assume that the Jews at the time of the Crucifixion did not have any fixed calendar, but had to consecrate the new moon according to the testimony of eye witnesses, how could it have been possible for the Court to shift a holiday from one day to another, if the eye witnesses had testified that they had seen the birth of the moon on a particular day and hour? The opinion that the Pharisees took particular pains that Pentecost should not fall on a Sunday, and therefore shifted the first day of Passover from Saturday to Friday, and intercalated the month of Nisan, that is, making thirty days instead of twenty-nine, has no support. We know from the Talmud that Nisan was never intercalated.³ The reason for keeping the month of Nisan as an ordinary month of twenty-nine days was to prevent confusion among the Jews of the Diaspora. If Nisan were either twenty-nine or thirty days, the Jews of the Diaspora in countries far from Palestine, would not be sure when the first day of Passover would fall, as apostles from Jerusalem, bringing the information of the sanctification of the new moon, might not reach

² H. Strack und P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, vol. II, pp. 845—53.

³ Rosh Hashanah, 14b.

them before the fourteenth of Nisan. On the other hand, if we assume that the Jews already had a fixed calendar at the time of Jesus, then we can produce evidence from Tannaitic literature that the first day of Passover fell on Saturday.

1. In the Tosefta we have the words, "the Ninth of Ab when falling on the Sabbath".⁴ If the calendar were fixed, this would involve the falling of the fifteenth of the previous Nisan (the first day of Passover) on a Saturday.

2. The Mishna Megillah indicates that Purim could fall on the fifth day (on Thursday).⁵ When the fourteenth of Adar fell on Thursday, Passover naturally fell on Saturday. Furthermore, from the same Mishna we learn that Purim could fall on the fourth day (Wednesday), the fifth day (Thursday), or on the Eve of Sabbath. If Purim fell on any of these three days, the first day of Passover would fall on the Sabbath, regardless of the fixation of the calendar.

According to Billerbeck a schism occurred among the Jews in the year of the Crucifixion. The Pharisees sacrificed the Pascal lamb on Thursday and celebrated the first day of Passover on Friday, while the Sadducees sacrificed the Pascal lamb on Friday and celebrated the first day of Passover on Saturday.⁶ To accept such an hypothesis would be to misinterpret the entire Jewish history of the Second Commonwealth. From Tannaitic literature we learn that the Sadducees said to their wives and daughters, "although we are Sadducees, we are afraid of the Pharisees and therefore follow their laws".⁷ If the Sadducees followed the laws of the Pharisees in their own homes, among their families, is there any likelihood that the Jews of that time sacrificed the Pascal lamb in the Temple on different days, some following the reckoning of the Pharisees, others

⁴ Tosefta, Tan. IV, 13.

⁵ Megillah, 1a.

⁶ Ein solches Jahr, in welchem das Passahfest in der nächsten Nähe des Sabbats lag, war auch das Todesjahr Jesu... So klappte bei der Passahfeier jenes Jahres ein Riß in Israel... Donnerstag, der nach pharisäischer Zählung der 14. Nisan war. An diesem Tage hat Jesus wohl mit der Mehrzahl seines Volkes das Passahmahl gehalten... Diese Mitglieder der höchsten jüdischen Behörde, vermutlich meist Sadduzäer, hielten sich eben an die offizielle Zählung der Monatstage, nach welcher jener Freitag ja der 14. Nisan war. pp. 851—2.

⁷ Niddah. 33b, comp. Tosefta ibid., 5, 3.

that of the Sadducees? This would cause a schism not only regarding the day of the slaughtering of the Pascal lamb, but also regarding the days of the eating of Matzoth, a thing which never occurred in Jerusalem at any time. Furthermore, from Josephus we learn that when the Sadducees became magistrates, "they addicted themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise bear them."⁸ If a Sadducee, as a magistrate, had to follow the laws and regulations of the Pharisees, to insure the obedience of the Jews, certainly he would not be able to sacrifice the Pascal lamb on the day which, according to the Pharisees, was already the first day of Passover.

According to Billerbeck the Pharisees, fearing that the day of the Omar would fall on Sunday, shifted the first day of Passover from Saturday to Friday. The controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees did not, however, have the day of the week as its issue (i. e., when the day of the Omar should fall), but rather the fixation of the date of the Omar. The Pharisees maintained that the day of Omar must always fall on the sixteenth of Nisan, regardless on which day of the week the sixteenth of Nisan occurred, while the Sadducees held that the day of the Omar must always be on the first day of the week, on a Sunday.⁹ According to the Pentateuch the two major holidays had fixed dates, Passover the fifteenth of Nisan, and the Festival of Tabernacles the fifteenth of Tishri. The holiday of Pentecost had no fixed date at all. From Leviticus 23 we learn that Passover is to be the fifteenth day of the first month. The Lawgiver, after telling about the holiday of Passover, continues: "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. . . . And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete." The Feast of Weeks is on the fiftieth day after the day of the Omar. The Lawgiver does not give any date at all for the Festival of Pentecost. This holiday depends entirely on the day

⁸ *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 4.

⁹ Tosefta, Men, X, 23, Mishnah, *ibid.* VI; Talmud, *ibid.* 65.

of the Omar, which again has no fixed date, but is recorded between the holiday of Passover and the festival of the first day of the seventh month.¹⁰ In the early Hellenistic period when the Pharisees changed the calendar from a solar to a lunar-solar one, the day of the Omar was fixed for the sixteenth of Nisan, regardless of what day of the week it was. The phrase *ממחרת השבת* was interpreted as referring to the morrow of the first day of Passover. The Festival of Pentecost, which, according to the Biblical account, had no fixed date, now became more or less stationary, as it was supposed to be on the fiftieth day after the day of the Omar. The Sadducees opposed this innovation and maintained that the day of the Omar is to be only on the morrow of the Sabbath, as it is stated in the Bible *ממחרת השבת* (on the morrow of the Sabbath), regardless of what day of the month it was. The Festival of Pentecost was likewise to be celebrated on the morrow of the Sabbath, of the fiftieth day after the day of the Omar.¹¹

The day of the Omar, as well as the Festival of Pentecost, was celebrated according to the Pharisaic doctrine, and never according to the Sadducees, for the people would not listen to the latter. Only once, by a ruse, did the Sadducees try to mislead the Pharisees, to gain their point. Two men were hired to testify falsely before the Sanhedrin with regard to the birth of the new moon, in order to make the Feast of Pentecost fall on the morrow of Saturday.¹²

The Pharisees would never shift the first day of Passover to another day, so as to prevent the day of the Omar from falling on Sunday.¹³ Their point of view was that the day of the Omar should always be on the sixteenth of Nisan, regardless of the day of the week. If the sixteenth of Nisan fell on Sunday, the Omar was offered, and the Pharisees never opposed it. When, however, the day of the Omar fell on Saturday, the Pharisees took special pains to

¹⁰ Leviticus, 23 4-22.

¹¹ Cf. S. Zeitlin, *Some Stages of the Jewish Calendar*, 1929; Idem, *Notes Relatives au Calendrier Juif*, *REJ.*, 1930.

¹² Tosefta, Rosh Hashanah, I, Talmud, *ibid.* 22b.

¹³ It is interesting to note that Father Power maintains that in the year when Jesus was crucified the Pharisees shifted the first day of Passover from Friday to Saturday, while Billerbeck is of the opinion that that year the Pharisees shifted the first day of Passover from Saturday to Friday.

demonstrate before the public that the offering of the Omar takes precedence over the Sabbath.¹⁴ Similarly when the fifteenth of Nisan (the first day of Passover) fell on a Sabbath, the sacrifice of the holiday took precedence over the Sabbath.

Torrey, in a most ingenious and brilliant article, published in a recent issue of this periodical,¹⁵ tries to dispose of the discrepancy between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels in these matters. He deals in particular with the expression *παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα* of Jn. 19 14, which, according to the consensus of opinion of New Testament scholars, refers to the Eve of Passover. The current interpretation of the expression brings the Fourth Gospel into conflict with the Synoptic Gospels, where it is stated that Jesus was crucified on the first day of Passover.¹⁶ Torrey removes the discrepancy by interpreting the word *παρασκευὴ* as a reference not to the Eve of Passover, but to the Friday of the Passover week. He maintains that "the *παρασκευὴ* in John 19 14 is not a colorless Greek word, 'preparation', but the Jewish technical term",¹⁷ and refers to *ערב שבת* or *ערוכתא*, Eve of Sabbath. Torrey's contention is open to many objections. The word *παρασκευὴ* is not a Jewish technical term at all. When the Hellenized Jews translated the words *ערב שבת*, Eve of Sabbath, they did not translate them by the word *παρασκευὴ*, but by the words *πρὸ σαββάτων*. Josephus, when he tells us that the twenty-four loaves for the Festival of Pentecost were baked on the Eve of Sabbath, uses the words *πρὸ τοῦ σαββάτου* and not *παρασκευὴ*.¹⁸ The author of the book of Judith, when he states that Judith fasted all the days of the year except the Eves of Sabbath and Sabbaths, also uses the word *πρὸ σαββάτων καὶ σαββάτων* and not *παρασκευὴ*.¹⁹ Philo quite frequently uses the word *παρασκευὴ*,²⁰ but only in the sense of pre-

¹⁴ Mishnah, Men. X, 3.

¹⁵ "The Date of the Crucifixion According to the Fourth Gospel," *JBL*, 1931, Part IV, pp. 227—241.

¹⁶ Mt. 26 2; Mk. 14 12; Lk. 22 7.

¹⁷ P. 237.

¹⁸ *Ant.* III, 10, 7; The Tosefta, Men. XI, 10—12, where the account of the twenty-four loaves is given, the phrase *ערב שבת* Eve of Sabbath, is used.

¹⁹ Judith, 8 6: "praeter sabbata".

²⁰ Philo, *De op. Mundi*, 26; *De Vita Mosis*, 31; *De Sac. Abelis et Caini*, 11, etc.

paration. This shows quite clearly that the word *παρασκευὴ* is not a Jewish technical term equivalent to *ערב שבת* or *ערוכתא*, Eve of Sabbath. Rather, the word *παρασκευὴ*, which has in Greek the meaning of preparation, became a pagan technical term for the Eve of Sabbath, as well as for the Eve of other holidays. So only the pagan writers used the word *παρασκευὴ* in referring to the Eve of Sabbath, or to the Eve of Holidays, because they knew that the Jews had to prepare their meals for the Sabbath on Friday. Augustus Caesar, in his decree that the Jews should not be summoned to appear before the judge on the Sabbath and on the Eve of the Sabbath, uses the word *παρασκευὴ*.²¹ The same Augustus Caesar said once in his letter to Tiberius that the Sabbath day is a fast day to the Jews.²² He was apparently of the opinion that the Jews, who did not prepare their food on the Eve of Sabbath, had to fast on the Sabbath.

Torrey, after explaining that the word *παρασκευὴ* does not refer to the Eve of Passover, says that the word *πάσχα* in this passage does not mean the "sacrificial meal held on the evening of the fourteenth of Nisan", but rather designates the Feast of Passover as a whole. In support of his point he quotes Deut. 16 27, 2 Chron. 35 8 f., and Ezek. 45 21;²³ but none of these passages shows that the word *פסח* refers to the festival.²⁴ Torrey continues his argument by saying, "the Talmud, *Pesachim* 9, 5, in the later period, expressly says that *pesach* had always been used to signify the seven-day feast." In the Mishna *Pesachim* 9, 5 the word *Pesach* does not refer at all to the Festival of Passover, but to the Pascal lamb. This is clearly borne out by the text.²⁵ Torrey further states, "It is an altogether natural usage. Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, 9, 3, illustrates

²¹ *Ant.* XVI, 6, 2.

²² "Ne Iudaeus quidem, mi Tiberi, tam diligenter sabbatis ieiunium servat quam ego hodie servavi" (Suetonius, Augustus, 76).

²³ p. 233.

²⁴ Cf. Pal. Talmud, *Pes.* 33a. Deut. 16 2, says, *חובת פסח צאן ובקר*... Hillel interprets the word *צאן*, flock, as referring to the Pascal lamb, and the words *צאן ובקר*, flock and the herd, as referring to the *chagiga*.

²⁵ The expression *פסח מצרים* refers to the Pascal lamb offered in the year of the Exodus, while the phrase *פסח דורות* is to be interpreted as the Pascal lambs which were offered after the year of the Exodus.

it." Josephus, however, does not use the word *πάσχα*, but *πάσχα δ' ἡ ἑορτή*—the Festival of the Passover. Dalman has, we believe correctly, pointed out: "Neither could the author (of Jn. 19 14) have meant... by the expression the 'Eve of the Passover' anything other than the day which the Jews call in Hebrew '*ereb pesah*', and in Aramaic '*arūbat pishā*', i. e. the day which preceded the Festival; never the Friday in the festive week, as Zahn suggests." (*Jesus—Jeshua*, p. 88.)

The passage in John 18 28, which relates that the Jews did not enter the judgment-hall of Pilate lest they should be defiled, in order that they might eat the Passover, according to most of the New Testament scholars, proves that Jesus was crucified on the fourteenth of Nisan, before the Pascal lamb was sacrificed. Torrey however maintains that *φαγεῖν τὸ πάσχα*, "eat the Passover", does not allude to the Pascal lamb, but to the *shelamim* which were sacrificed during the entire Festival of Passover. This he says, is "a wider Talmudic use of *pesach*, to mean the *festal offerings* of the successive days (*שלמי פסח*)."²⁶ But the words *שלמי פסח*, *shalme pesach*, never refer to the *chagiga* offerings brought during the festival, but only to the *shelamim* which were offered together with the Pascal lamb on the fourteenth of Nisan. It also applied to a lamb, set aside as the Pascal offering, which disappeared before it could be sacrificed. In case this lamb was later found it could not be sacrificed any more as a Pascal lamb, since the time prescribed had already passed. It had to be sacrificed as *shelamim* and is called *shalme pesach*. Cf. Talmud, *Zeb.* 36a, *Rosh Hashana* 5a, *Pes.* 97a. Torrey may be right in reference to 2 Chron. 30, but there we have *וַיֹּאכְלוּ אֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ שְׁלָמִים* while in John we have *φάγωσιν τὸ πάσχα*.²⁷

Thus we have seen that a scholar of such great erudition and originality as Torrey did not succeed in reconciling the discrepancy between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels. I believe that C. S. Davidson is quite right when he says that "There is an

²⁶ P. 240.

²⁷ Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, p. 87, "but probably, instead of *wa-yokhelu ham-moed* ('and they ate the feast') one should read—*wa-yekhallu ham-moed* ('and they accomplished the feast, by slaughtering thank-offerings'). So it is not possible to make use of this expression as an explanation of John 18 28."

irreconcilable difference between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, in respect to the date that Jesus was crucified."²⁸ The question now arises, how it was possible that in so short a time after the Crucifixion such a contradiction should have arisen between the Gospels. Jesus was crucified as a Christ, and on a well-known day, the Eve of Passover, or the first day of Passover, on which the disciples of Jesus, who were Jews, undoubtedly participated in the ceremony of the slaughtering of the Pascal lamb or in the festivities of the Passover. How, then, can we account for the fact that such an important discrepancy is found in the Gospels?²⁹

²⁸ *An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. II, p. 371.

²⁹ Cf. S. Zeitlin, *Origine de la Divergence*, etc. *REJ.*, 1926.